

AMDI7-128

4/15/08

Bell, Leanne S (DOT)

From: Andrew Eller [andrewseller@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2008 4:00 PM
To: DOT STIP
Subject: r.e. ID #19214 – Juneau Access Project

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Dear STIP,

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to comment on Amendment 17 of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. I am forwarding comment on the ID#19214 – the proposed Juneau Access Project.

I had the opportunity to spend three summers in Berners Bay conducting fisheries research (~330 days total). Knowing the exact proposed road corridor has shown me that this project, although technically feasible with increased construction cost, will potentially affect the abundant wildlife and fish in this area. This is reason enough for me to question the validity of the project, although I agree that transportation needs to be improved to and from Juneau.

I would like to encourage the STIP to reconsider the current priority of this project. As a frequent visitor to Berners Bay I feel that this partially funded project will, especially in its initial stages, cause irreparable damage to an otherwise intact area. Despite the argument that there are many of these locations in Alaska, I have seen first hand the biological importance of Berners Bay, a hotspot. I feel that the most harm to habitat in the Berners Bay area will occur if this project starts this summer. I feel that proposing this project, that is estimated to take 12 years to complete, is starting at the wrong end.

In order to improve transportation and energy conservation (less fuel usage) along this corridor, I feel that the effectiveness of management should be tested before the "road" is constructed. I feel that this will take less than 12 years to complete, and could remove the necessity for this current proposal.

Steps that will take fewer years to improve transportation within Lynn Canal may include:

Encourage competition and the involvement of the private sector by contracting the Lynn Canal ferry route to a private entity. Details in the contract would include reliable service and fuel efficiency parameters that are not currently met by AMHS vessels.

This run is profitable in the summer travel season and may catch the attention of

Work with the legislature to locate transportation funding to replacing the existing vessels with the more efficient power systems and vessels. Establish an authority such as the IFA (Interisland Ferry Authority) to service Northern Lynn Canal.

Remove the fast ferry from service as the fuel consumption is not economically viable.

Encourage the cities of Juneau, Haines and Skagway to develop a transportation plans that will improve services and transportation to ferry terminals and if needed obtain funds
Construct a vessel to serve these communities.

Provide the public with a total funding amount with the Golder Associates input accounted for. Provide a total cost for the project!

With some improvements to the existing structure, I feel that transportation could be improved, construction avoided in an important biological area and users of the system proud of the product.

Thank you for your time

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